

**Supporting A Budget Line Item For The Catskill Park And Catskill Forest Preserve In The New York State Environmental Protection Fund (EPF)**

Referred to: Energy and Environment (Chairman Loughran and Legislators Richard Parete, Rodriguez, Ronk, and Wawro), and The Economic Development, Tourism, Housing, Planning and Transit Committee (Chairman Briggs and Legislators Allen, Archer, Bartels, Litts, Maio, and Maloney)

Chairman John Parete offers the following:

WHEREAS, the Catskill region is home to the Catskill Park, established by the State of New York in 1904, and the Catskill Forest Preserve lands; and

WHEREAS, 705,000 acres of land within the “Blue Line” of the Catskill Park and 287,500 acres of Catskill Forest Preserve land exist for public enjoyment; and

WHEREAS, all outdoor recreational activities, including those that rely on public and protected lands as well as those that rely on private lands, attracted nearly 2.5 million visitors with an estimated economic impact of more than \$115 million; and

WHEREAS, in 2015, the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, in cooperation with the Department of State and Adirondack Park Agency, expects to fund an estimated \$400,000 in smart growth grant applications from Catskill Park communities and organizations; and

WHEREAS, the Catskill Park Coalition recognizes the goal of increasing tourism-friendly access within the “Blue Line” requires continuity and comprehensive integration between city and state land holdings; and

WHEREAS, six-year holding periods for land acquisitions effectively tie up the resources of cooperating land trusts, restricting their ability to respond to important land protection opportunities; and

WHEREAS, dedicated annual funding from the EPF for Catskill Park land protection would leverage this partnership by 100%; and

WHEREAS, line items exist in the EPF budget and in 2014, a new line item was added to allocate funding to Suffolk County for water quality protection and line items were increased for a Long Island Pesticide Prevention Program; and

WHEREAS, much of the economic activity of the Catskill Park region is focused on the preserved lands of the park; and

**Resolution No. 45      February 17, 2015**

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WHEREAS, stewardship and maintenance of these lands are critical for the continued use and enjoyment of the region, to strengthen the economy, and protect the vital ecosystem services of the region; now, therefore be it

RESOLVED, the Ulster County Legislature urges the New York State Governor and it's Legislative leader to establish a budget line item of \$4 million for the Catskill Park and Catskill Forest Preserve within the counties of Ulster, Delaware, Sullivan and Greene in the New York State Environmental Protection Fund, beginning fiscal year 2015-16 and ongoing; and, be it further

RESOLVED, that the Clerk of the Ulster County Legislature shall forward certified copies of this resolution to Governor Andrew Cuomo, New York State Department of Environmental Conservation Commissioner Joseph Martens, Senator John Bonacic, Senator James Seward, Senator Thomas Libous, Assemblymen Clifford Crouch, Assemblyman Pete Lopez, Assemblywomen Claudia Tenney, as well as the Clerks of the Sullivan and Greene County Legislatures,

and moves its adoption.

ADOPTED BY THE FOLLOWING VOTE:

AYES:

NOES:

Passed Committee: Energy and Environment on \_\_\_\_\_.

Passed Committee: Economic Development, Tourism, Housing, Planning, and Transit on \_\_\_\_\_.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

NONE